

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 02430

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SUBJECT: EDITORIALS IN IRISH DAILIES AUGUST 9, 1978

IN ADDITION TO HEAVY WIRE SERVICE COVERAGE OF VANCE'S
VISIT TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT AND NEXT MONTH'S PRESIDENT
CARTER, SADAT AND BEGIN MEETING, THREE MORNING PAPERS
CARRY EDITORIALS FROM WHICH EXCERPTS FOLLOW:
ON TO CAMP DAVID (IRISH TIMES)

IT IS NOT EXTRAVAGANT TO THINK THAT THE CHOICE BETWEEN
PEACE AND WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST MAY DEPEND ON NEXT
MONTH'S CAMP DAVID MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER,
PRESIDENT SADAT AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN. YESTERDAY'S
ANNOUNCEMENT EVIDENTLY WAS PRODUCED BY THE PERSONAL
(AND HANDWRITTEN) LETTERS FROM MR. CARTER WHICH
SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE DELIVERED TO THE EGYPTIAN
AND ISRAELI LEADERS, AND MAY BE SAID TO REPRESENT
WASHINGTON'S TRUMP CARD.

US OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THEIR
GOVERNMENT IS NOT HOLDING OUT HIGH HOPES. SENSIBLY,
THEY MAKE THE POINT THAT MR. CARTER INVITED THE TWO
MEN TO MEET HIM TOGETHER BECAUSE THE STAKES WERE NOW
INTOLERABLY HIGH, AND THERE SEEMED TO BE NO OTHER WAY
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TO EREAK THE DEADLOCK. ONLY LAST WEEK MR. SADAT
EMPHATICALLY DECLARED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OSRAELIS AT ANY LEVEL UNTIL THEY
AGREED TO WITHDRAW FROM ALL OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS.
ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SAY SO, IN SO MANY WORDS, MR.
SADAT APPARENTLY HAD DECIDED TO FIGHT MR. BEGIN'S
INFLEXIBILITY WITH HIS OWN. THE AMERICANS WERE

ALARMED, FEARING A FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF ARAB MILITANCY AND THE LOSS OF PATIENCE OF SUCH INFLUENTIAL MODERATES AS SAUDI ARABIA. THE QUESTION WAS WHETHER MR. SADAT AND MR. BEGIN COULD BE PERSUADED TO MEET FACE-TO-FACE, WHICH THEY HAVE NOT DONE SINCE THE EUPHORIC DAYS OF LAST DECEMBER.

MR. BEGIN'S ACCEPTANCE, IT IS FAIR TO GUESS, WAS SECURED MORE EASILY THAN THAT OF THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT. THE FORMER WAS ANXIOUS TO SHOW THAT HE WAS NOT AS OBDURATE AS HE HAD BEEN PAINTED, AND HAS NOTHING TO LOSE BY GOING TO CAMP DAVID. MR. SADAT, FOR HIS PART, MUST HAVE BEEN GIVEN SOME ASSURANCES THAT AMERICAN PRESSURE OF HIS BEHALF - PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP - WOULD BE APPLIED TO MR. BEGIN.

THERE HAVE BEEN UNOFFICIAL REPORTS, SINCE THE LEEDS CASTLE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MR. VANCE AND HIS TWO COUNTERPARTS, THAT MR. BEGIN LATELY HAS BECOME MORE OPEN TO THE IDEA OF TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE. THE CAMP DAVID MEETING WILL SHOW WHETHER OR NOT SUCH RUMOURS ARE TRUE. IF THEY ARE, THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT PROGRESS WILL BE MADE NEXT MONTH. WHILE NOBODY EXPECTS THE ENCOUNTER TO PRODUCE A SETTLEMENT, THERE IS AT LEAST THE CHANCE THAT NEW

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LIFE WILL BE BREATHED INTO THE MORIBUND PEACE INITIATIVE.

IT MUST BE ASSUMED THAT THE INCREASINGLY BITTER PROP-AGANDA WAR BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL WILL BE SUSPENDED, SO THAT NO OPPORTUNITY WILL BE GIVEN TO ANYBODY TO FIND A MOTIVE FOR SABOTAGING THE SEPTEMBER SUMMIT. ANOTHER THREAT, OF COURSE, LIES IN THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON. IF THIS CONTINUES, AND/OR GETS WORSE, MR. CARTER'S CAREFUL PLANNING MAY GO FOR NOTHING. ISRAEL, WITH ITS INFLUENCE ON, AND HELP FOR, THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS, HAS A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY HERE.

SUMMIT HOPES (IRISH PRESS)

THE NEWS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, AN AREA IN WHICH IRELAND, AS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WITH TROOPS INVOLVED IN THE LEBANON U.S. MISSION, NOW HAS A VERY DIRECT CONCERN, HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A BREAKTHROUGH. AND WHILE IT MAY BE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC TO REGARD IT AS SUCH, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE AGREEMENT ON A SUMMIT MEETING AT CAMP DAVID NEXT MONTH BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER, EGYPT'S

PRESIDENT SADAT AND ISRAEL'S PREMIER BEGIN, IS A
DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HAVE SEEMED ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE
JUST 24 HOURS AGO....

...THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS NOW CHANGED HIS MIND
SAYS SOMETHING FOR THE POWERS OF PERSUASION EXERCISED
BY THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE, MR. VANCE, WHO
TRAVELLED ON TO CAIRO AFTER A LENGTHY MEETING WITH
ISRAELI LEADERS. SO FAR, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO
INDICATION OF ANY SOFTENING OF THE BEGIN LINE,

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THOUGH IT MAY WELL BE THAT PRIVATE ASSURANCES CONVEYED
THROUGH MR. VANCE HAVE PLAYED A PART IN BRINGING THE
EGYPTIAN LEADER BACK TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE.

THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT
POLITICALLY FOR THE THREE LEADERS, AND THAT, SOME
FEEL, MAY IMPROVE THE PROSPECTS OF SOMETHING
WORTHWHILE BEING ACHIEVED. CERTAINLY FOR PRESIDENT
SADAT IT IS LIKELY TO BE THE LAST CHANCE TO PURSUE
HIS INITIATIVE; HIS POSITION IN EGYPT AND THROUGHOUT
THE REST OF A MOSTLY CRITICAL ARAB WORLD WOULD
SCARCELY SURVIVE ANOTHER PEACE TALKS COLLAPSE. INDEED,
IT IS THE RUMBLINGS ALREADY BEING HEARD FROM SAUDIA
ARABIA, THE KEY TO AMERICAN OIL SUPPLIES, PLUS THE
WORSENING SITUATION IN THE LEBANON, WHICH HAS HELPED
SPUR ON AMERICAN PEACE EFFORTS.

BUT IF PRESIDENT SADAT FACES POLITICAL PROBLEMS, SO
TOO DOES PREMIER BEGIN, AND FOR MUCH THE SAME REASONS -
THE FAILURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS TO MAKE ANY SUBSTANTIAL

PROGRESS. ALREADY HIS CABINET IS DIVIDED OVER HIS
INTRANSIGENT LINE AND HE IS UNDER MOUNTING PRESSURE
BOTH FROM THE OPPOSITION LABOUR PARTY, THE BURGEONING
PEACE MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL, AS WELL AS THE UNITED STATES.
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AND FOR PRESIDENT CARTER, STILL SLIPPING BADLY IN
THE OPINION POLLS AT HOME AND WITH THE DOLLAR STILL
SLIDING ABROAD, A SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT COULD HELP
RESTORE BOTH TO FORMER GLORY. BUT MOST OF ALL, THE
SUMMIT, HOPEFULLY, WILL STEER THE MIDDLE EAST AWAY
FROM THE DANGER OF ANOTHER ARAB/ISRAELI WAR, WHICH
COULD SO EASILY BE SPARKED OFF BY THE CONTINUING
LEBANON BLOODSHED. AND THAT ALONE WOULD BE A MAJOR
ACHIEVEMENT.

VANCE'S VISIT (IRISH INDEPENDENT)

CYRUS VANCE'S VISIT TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT IS BEING
WATCHED WITH BATED BREATH AROUND THE MIDDLE EAST,
AND IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD AS WELL. FOR IF HE
SUCCEEDS IN KEEPING THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI
DIALOGUE OPEN HE WILL HAVE CONTRIBUTED, EVEN IF
ONLY IN A SMALL MEASURE, TO MAINTAINING PEACE IN THAT
AREA -- RELATIVE PEACE, THAT IS -- AND PREVENTING A
RENEWED HARDENING OF ATTITUDES.

THE TASK FACING THE AMERICAN IS A DAUNTING ONE.
PLAINLY MR. BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT DOES NOT REGARD ANY
ARAB, EVEN A MODERATE SUCH AS PRESIDENT SADAT WITH
COMFORT. STILL MORE OBVIOUS IS THE FACT THAT THE
MAIN CONCESSIONS MUST COME FROM THE ISRAELIS, AND
GIVEN THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER IN ISRAEL, CONCESSIONS
WILL BE HARD TO COME BY.

BUT IF THE DOOR IS TO BE KEPT OPEN, THERE WILL HAVE
TO BE SOME "GIVE" BY THE ISRAELIS WHICH WILL BE SEEN
AS SUCH BY THE REST OF THE ARAB WORLD AND WHICH WILL
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RELIEVE SOME OF THE PRESSURE BEING APPLIED TO SADAT
BY FAR MORE FRACTIOUS ARAB COUNTRIES. THERE ARE
EVEN ISRAELIS WHO ARE PREPARED TO CONCEDE THAT FOR
SOME OF HIS DEMANDS SADAT HAS A CASE.

A VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY BOTH SADAT AND BEGIN IS NOW
ON, AND THE RESULT OF VANCE'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE
EAST WILL ONLY BE APPRECIATED WHEN IT IS SEEN WHAT
EMERGES FROM THAT WASHINGTON TRIP. IF VANCE HAS
PREPARED THE GROUND PROPERLY THEN SOMETHING SHOULD
EMERGE. BUT WE HAVE ALL BEEN SAYING THAT ABOUT THE
MIDDLE EAST FOR A LONG TIME NOW -- AND NOTHING GREAT
HAS EMERGED... KRENE

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